IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims whereby the claims are as follows:

1.(Currently Amended) A ~~molding~~ method of molding a microlens array whereby the microlens array ~~30~~ is molded by heating and compressing a glass element ~~3~~ between oppositely placed first and second cores ~~1, 2~~ each having a compression molding surface, comprising the steps of:

~~forming a depression or projection part 10A on the compression molding surface 10 of at least one of the cores 1 for transferring and molding a plurality of convex or concave lens elements 31;~~

setting a glass element ~~3~~ between the compression molding surfaces ~~10, 11~~ of the first and second cores ~~1, 2~~ , wherein depressions or projections are formed on at least one of the surfaces for transferring and molding a plurality of convex or concave lens elements; thereafter

compressing the glass element ~~3~~ between the compression molding surfaces ~~10, 11~~ of the first and second cores ~~1, 2~~ while providing restriction means ~~4~~ for preventing the glass element ~~3~~ from escaping in ~~the~~ a direction perpendicular to ~~the~~ a compression direction of the glass element ~~3~~; and

with the restriction means in place, compression molding the glass element ~~with the restriction means 4 and~~ between the compression molding surfaces ~~10, 11~~ of the first and second cores ~~1, 2~~.

2.(Currently Amended) The molding method ~~of a microlens array~~ according to claim 1, wherein the compression molding of the glass element ~~3~~ is conducted in vacuum.

3.(Currently Amended) ~~A molding apparatus of~~ Apparatus for molding a microlens array, whereby a microlens array ~~30~~ is molded by heating and compressing a glass element ~~3 between~~ , comprising

oppositely placed first and second cores ~~1, 2,~~ each having a compression molding surfaces between which surfaces a microlens array is moldable by heating and compression; ~~wherein~~

a depression or projection part ~~10A is~~ formed on ~~a~~ the compression molding surface ~~10~~ of at least one of the first and second cores ~~1, 2~~ for transferring and molding a plurality of convex or concave lens elements ~~31~~;

a middle plate having a hole ~~4A~~ at its center ~~is provided~~; and

the hole being adapted to have the glass element ~~3 is~~ set therein ~~in the hole 4A of a middle plate 4~~, and at least one of the cores having a tip ~~part 1A~~ including the compression molding surface ~~10 of said at least one of the cores 1 is~~ of said core, the tip being disposed so as to be able to ascend or descend in the hole ~~4A of the middle plate 4~~; ~~and~~

whereby the apparatus is adapted to compression mold the glass element ~~3 is compression molded~~ by means of said compression molding surfaces ~~10, 11 of the cores 1, 2~~ and the inner peripheral surface of the hole ~~4A~~ of the middle plate ~~4~~ by moving said compression molding surfaces ~~10, 11~~ of both cores ~~1, 2~~ in a relatively closing direction.

4.(Currently Amended) The molding apparatus ~~of a microlens array~~ according to claim 3, ~~wherein~~ further comprising means for maintaining a vacuum state ~~is maintained~~ during the compression molding of the glass element ~~3~~.